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III.—*French Literature in Louisiana.*

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I.—INTRODUCTION.

IN the paper which I had the pleasure of presenting at the last convention of our Association, I spoke of the French language in Louisiana, and took the opportunity, while giving a brief history of the language in our State, to assert that the Louisianians speak a pure and correct French. I think, in order to prove this, that it may be advisable this year to give an account of our Louisiana literature, and I hope that the subject may be of interest to the members of the Modern Language Association.

During the French domination, the colony of Louisiana improved very slowly, and although the inhabitants were generally men of culture, the population was so small that there could be no literary enthusiasm. We find, therefore, during that period, no works written in Louisiana, except the reports of officers, among which may be mentioned a paper in 1745 by Deverges, an engineer, upon the mouths of the Mississippi river. Another document is also of great importance; it is the celebrated "*Mémoire des négociants et habitants de la Louisiane sur l'événement du 29 octobre 1768*," written by Lafrénière and Caresse, two of the chiefs of the Revolution of 1768, which was to end so unhappily by the execution of several distinguished men.

During the Spanish domination, the most warlike and popular governor was Galvez. As Achilles found a Homer to sing his exploits, so Julian Poydras wrote in 1779 an epic poem in French on the campaigns of the young governor. The work, unfortunately, has not come down to us, but the poet has not been forgotten, for one of our principal streets in New Orleans bears the name of Mr. Poydras.

In 1794, appeared '*Le Moniteur de la Louisiane*,' probably the first paper published in Louisiana.

Jefferson having acquired the colony for the United States in 1803, its population and the material interests of the people increased so rapidly, that the territory of Orleans became a State in 1812. Two years later, the first book of our own literature was published, a tragedy, "*Poucha Houmma*" by Le Blanc de Villeneuve. I shall not speak at present of this work, as I wish to divide my subject into several parts: history and biography, the drama, poetry, novels, and miscellaneous works. I may add that in this review of our Louisiana Literature I do not speak of the journalists, of whom many were quite distinguished.

II.—HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

The history of Louisiana is exceedingly interesting, and it early attracted the attention of a distinguished man, Judge François-Xavier Martin, of the Supreme Court, who wrote in 1827 his history in English. Before that time, we had had the works of Charlevoix, of Le Page du Pratz, of Laharpe, of Bossu, of Chevalier, of de Vergennes, of Barbé-Marbois, and several others, but these histories or travels had been written in French, and were very incomplete.

As the majority of Louisianians in the beginning of this century only spoke French, a history in that language was very necessary to them, and Mr. Gayarré evinced his patriotism when he published in 1830 his '*Essai Historique sur la Louisiane*.'¹ The author was then but twenty-five years old, but we can see on every page a great enthusiasm for his subject and his devotion to the State. The narrative is clear, and the method is good, and we can already recognize in this essay the author of the "*History of Louisiana*." Mr. Gayarré has been the Henri Martin, we might add the J. R. Green of Louisiana. He has spent almost his whole life in writing and re-writing the history of his native State.

In 1846, he published his '*Histoire de la Louisiane*'² in two volumes. It comprises only the French domination, but the work is of great value, as Mr. Gayarré, who had been United States senator and afterwards Secretary of State of Louisiana, had been able to procure many documents of our colonial period,

¹ CHARLES GAYARRÉ, '*Essai Historique sur la Louisiane*.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 441 pp. Imprimé par Benjamin Levy, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1830.

² CHARLES GAYARRÉ, '*Histoire de la Louisiane*.' 2 Vol. 8vo. Magne and Weisse, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1846 and 1847.

and had given them in full in his history. The author seemed in this work to wish to divest his writings of his own personality, and he adopted the plan which has rendered de Barante's *Ducs de Bourgogne* so interesting, that of giving the documents of the times, and causing the personages to relate, as it were, their own history. This method is very attractive, but it is not the philosophy of history. Mr. Gayarré's own views were of too great importance to be ignored, and his countrymen were highly pleased when he gave his last work on Louisiana written in English a more philosophical cast. Mr. Gayarré was greatly honored by his State in his youth, and although he has now no official position, no one is more venerated and esteemed in Louisiana than our historian.

In 1841, Mr. Victor Debouchel published his '*Histoire de la Louisiane, depuis les premières découvertes jusqu'en 1840.*'³ The work is interesting and the style is clear and concise. The aim of the author was to write a history for schools, but which might be read with profit, even by men of culture. The dates are very carefully given at the beginning of every paragraph treating of a different subject, and the contents of each chapter or "esquisse" are indicated by a well chosen title. Mr. Debouchel gives some amusing details about our old laws: in 1808, the fees of a lawyer were \$16.00, before the Supreme Court or the Circuit Court, and before a parish court \$5.00. In 1809, however, the fee was fixed at \$11.00 for every case. The last part of Mr. Debouchel's book is devoted to the great financial crisis of 1840, when a spirit of speculation seemed to have taken possession of the Louisianians. The history ends with the following very encouraging enumeration of the schools in Louisiana in 1840: three large colleges: Franklin in Opelousas, Jefferson in St. James, Louisiana at Jackson; thirty academies, of which six were for young ladies, and three convents.

Mr. Debouchel's work was followed in 1854 by Mr. Henri Rémy's, who published a well written '*Histoire de la Louisiane*'⁴ in the "*St. Michel*," a weekly paper of the parish of St. James. It is very much to be regretted that the publication of this history was discontinued when the author had only gone

³ VICTOR DEBOUCHEL, '*Histoire de la Louisiane.*' 1 Vol, 16mo, 190 pp. J. F. Lelievre, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1841.

⁴ HENRI RÉMY, '*Histoire de la Louisiane.*' cf. *Le Journal St. Michel*, Paroisse St. Jacques, 1854.

as far as 1731. The wars against the Natchez and the Chicasas are related with many details and great impartiality, and we see very often that justice was not always on the side of the white man. If the savage was cruel in his warfare, it must be admitted that he had generally been led to hostility by the act of some inferior French officer, as was the case with Chépar, at Fort Rosalie. Mr. Rémy praises Bienville as governor, but is very severe against the French government and its unwise colonial administration.

Two works written by ladies, both teachers of reputation in New Orleans, are now to be examined. Mme. Laure Andry imitated Lamé Fleury's simple and conversational style, and succeeded in producing a really charming '*Histoire de la Louisiane pour les enfants*.'⁵ I have never read a book which pleased me more; it is so unassuming and, at the same time, so entertaining.

Mme. D. Girard, an old lady of most wonderful energy, who still teaches, although some of her pupils are now grandmothers, published in 1881 her '*Histoire des Etats-Unis suivie de l'Histoire de la Louisiane*.'⁶ It is a small book and more a chronicle or chronology than a history, but is very useful for reference.

We now come to a work which was received by the people of Louisiana with almost filial respect. Bernard de Marigny, whose ancestor had been a companion of Iberville, after having been a member of two State constitutional conventions, and for many years, of the House and Senate of Louisiana, presented in 1854 to the legislature of the State his '*Réflexions sur la Politique des Etats-Unis. Statistique de l'Espagne, de l'Ile de Cube, etc.*'⁷ The author was then seventy years old and struggling with adversity, although he had once a fortune of \$4,000,000, and his father had received with princely hospitality the exiled Louis-Philippe d'Orléans. Mr. de Marigny was one of the most typical men of the old régime, generous, elegant, brave and witty. His "calembours" have become as celebrated as his duels, and his eloquence was natural and pleasing. His work begins with the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, explains

5 MME. LAURE ANDRY, '*Histoire de la Louisiane pour les Enfants*.' 1 Vol. 16mo, 163 pp. Eug. Antoine, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1882.

6 MME. D. GIRARD, '*Histoire des Etats-Unis suivie de l'Histoire de la Louisiane*.' 1 Vol. 18mo, 84 pp. Eug. Antoine, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1881.

7 BERNARD DE MARIGNY, '*Réflexions sur la Politique des Etats-Unis, Statistique de l'Espagne, de l'Ile de Cube, etc.*' 1 Vol. 8vo, 95 pp. J. L. Sollée, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1854.

the causes of the American Revolution, and gives a rapid review of the annexations to the United States, urging on the latter to take possession of Cuba. The author then enumerates the conquests of the European nations, and gives a glowing account of the future of our union. Strange to say, only seven years before the Civil War began, he did not seem to have foreseen the terrible events that were approaching. Mr. de Marigny ends by claiming in a few touching words the indulgence of his fellow-citizens: "en raison des motifs qui raniment mes forces et me font presque oublier mes malheurs et mes vieilles années."

'Histoire des Comités de Vigilance aux Attakapas,'⁸ by Alexandre Barde, is a true story, but has all the interest of a romance. It relates the efforts of some valiant men to free their parishes from the bandits, who, like the *chauffeurs*, were committing the greatest atrocities, and whom the law was powerless to punish. The vigilants were men of courage, of wealth, and of culture, and among them, were Alexandre Mouton, ex-governor and United States Senator; his son Alfred Mouton, the brave general killed only a few years later at Mansfield; Major St. Julien, a real *chevalier*; Alcibiade De Blanc, afterwards a judge of our Supreme Court; Alcée Judice, most eloquent and intrepid; the Martins, the Voorhies, the Broussards, and many others of the best and most respected families. Mr. Barde not only gives the history of the committees; he describes most accurately the picturesque Tèche country, and relates all the legends and traditions of the Attakapas region. I do not think that any history of Louisiana can give as correct an idea of life in our country parishes before the war as Mr. Barde's work. No one can begin to read it without finishing it, and the adventures of our Louisianians are as interesting as those of Dumas' celebrated "mousquetaires."

'Esquisses Locales'⁹ par un Inconnu (Cyprien Dufour) 1847. This work was first published in the "Courrier de la Louisiane," and excited the greatest interest. The author presented a series of pictures of the most prominent men of the day, and showed the most consummate tact and skill in his criticisms. His style is sprightly and witty, and he displays throughout the utmost

8 ALEXANDRE BARDE, 'Histoire des Comités de Vigilance aux Attakapas.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 428 pp. Imprimerie du Meschacébé et de l'Avant-Coureur, St. Jean-Baptiste, 1861.

9 UN INCONNU (CYPRIEN DUFOUR), 'Esquisses Locales.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 147 pp. J. L. Soll e, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1847.

finesse. For us who read that book after forty years, and who are almost posterity for the men mentioned by Mr. Dufour, we must admit that his judgement about his contemporaries was almost always correct, and that his predictions about their future were quite prophetic. For instance, when he speaks of John Slidell, the great Louisiana politician, so widely known afterwards through the "Trent" affair, he portrays the wily diplomat in the most graphic manner. 'Esquisses Locales' is a very useful work for the student of the history and literature of Louisiana. He can see in looking over the pages of this little book all manner of men of the old régime: lawyers, statesmen, journalists, prose writers, and poets. I only regret that Mr. Dufour did not extend his gallery of portraits to the physicians of the time, of whom so many were distinguished, and that he did not give us a glimpse of old plantation life, by presenting to us some of our refined, chivalric and intelligent sugar planters. It is a great loss to our literature that "Un Inconnu," who was an able lawyer, has produced only one work, for such a brilliant pen could have given us some charming comedies of real life.

In the parish of St. James, there is at a distance of five miles from the river a settlement in the woods; it is called "la Grande Pointe," and is very prosperous. The inhabitants are all descendants of the Acadian exiles, and have retained the energy of their fathers. The men are great deer and duck hunters, and cultivate the land; the women are very pious and industrious. It is there that old Perique manufactured the famous tobacco *carrots* which bear his name. 'Le Destin d'un Brin de Mousse,'¹⁰ by Mlle. Désirée Martin is an autobiography, and reveals to us the daily life of these worthy people. The author speaks with great reverence of her parents, especially of her grandfather, a patriarch surrounded by a progeny of seventy-eight children and grandchildren. From having been a most happy "gardeuse d'oies," Mlle. Martin became an unhappy nun. After many years passed in a convent, she retired to "la Grande Pointe," and related her story and that of her ancestors to her little nephews. Although an ex-nun, there is not a word of irreverence against religion in the book; the author seems to have been of a thoroughly truthful and honest disposition. She communicates to us all her feelings and we can but respect her

¹⁰ Mlle. DÉsirÉE MARTIN, 'Les Veillées d'une Soeur ou le Destin d'un Brin de Mousse.
1 Vol. 16mo, 230 pp. Imprim. Cosmopolite, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1877.

filial piety, her devotion to her God and her love for Louisiana. Here is a pleasing characteristic passage: "Avant de mettre pied à terre, devinez donc, mes chers enfants, quelle idée enfantine me vint?—De boire de l'eau de votre fleuve tant aimé? . . .

. —Tout juste, chère Louisa; je me fis apporter un verre d'eau du Mississippi et je le vidai d'un trait en disant; 'Fontaine, je ne boirai jamais de meilleure eau que la tienne.'

Before passing to another subject, I wish to mention, under the head of history, though not strictly belonging to it, an address by Mr. Gayarré in opposition to Mr. Livingston's report to the Legislature on the abolition of capital punishment.¹¹ The work was published in 1826, and was one of the earliest in our Louisiana literature.

III.—THE DRAMA.

Before the revival of the drama in France by the rise of the romantic school; before 'Henri III et sa Cour,' before 'Hernani,' and while Marie-Joseph Chénier, Lemercier, and Ducis were still masters of the stage, we had in Louisiana a tragedy which may be read with some interest. Le Blanc de Villeneuve, an ex-officer in the French army, wrote at the age of seventy-eight, a drama on an episode of Indian life. While employed by the government among the Tchactas, from 1752 to 1758, he heard the story of the father who had sacrificed himself to save his son's life, and he says that many years afterwards he thought of writing a play on this subject, in order to defend the Indians from the imputation of having been savages without any human feelings.

This work, 'Poucha-Houmma,'¹² is a regular classical tragedy, and the unities of time, place, and action seem to be well observed. The style is somewhat too grandiloquent and Corneilian for Indian personages; for instance, the play begins thus:

Augustes descendants d'un peuple sans pareil,
Très illustres enfans des enfans du Soleil,
Enfin voici le jour, où la saison prospère
Va payer vos travaux d'un précieux salaire:
Ce jour, vous le savez, jadis par nos ayeux,

¹¹ CHARLES GAYARRÉ, 'Discours adressé à la Législature, en réfutation du Rapport de Mr. Livingston sur l'Abolition de la Peine de Mort.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 35 pp. Benj. Levy, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1826.

¹² LE BLANC DE VILLENEUVE, 'Poucha-Houmma.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 58 pp. Imprimerie du Courrier de la Le, Nouvelle-Orléans. 1814.

Fut toujours mis au rang des jours les plus heureux.
 Je n'ai jamais manqué d'en célébrer la fête,
 Depuis soixante hivers écoulés sur ma tête.
 Que vos cœurs satisfaits s'expriment par vos chants ;
 La terre, sous vos yeux, a placé ses présens :
 A notre bienfaiteur offrez-en les prémices.
 Puisse-t-il agréer vos pieux sacrifices !
 Pour moi, triste jouet du sort le plus cruel,
 Je ne puis présider à l'acte solennel.
 L'ancien de nos vieillards pourra prendre ma place,
 Je dois me retirer, je le demande en grâce.

(à part).

Malheureux que je suis, un rêve me confond. . . .

We see then that, as in 'Athalie,' a dream is pursuing Poucha-Houmma with its sinister omen. He does not wish to preside over "la Fête du Petit Blé," the most important of all the festivals of the Hoummas. Tchilita-Be, Poucha's brother, exhorts him to attend to his duties of chief, and asks him to relate his dream. The latter says that he had dreamed that his son Cala-Be, who had escaped after having killed a Tchacta, was to be put to death the next day. In the second act, Cala-Be, accompanied by his wife Fouchi whom he had married among the the Attac-Aspas, returns to his village. In the third act, is related the festival of the "Petit Blé," one feature of which was that the children were to be flogged unmercifully by their mothers on that day. While the "Petit Blé" was being celebrated, arrives Nachouba, a friend of Poucha-Houmma, who says that the Tchactas are coming to claim the murderer. The Houmma chief, thereupon, orders his son to escape from his enemies, and there is a touching struggle between the father, who wants to save the son, and the latter and his wife who want to brave the enemies. At last, Cala-Be and Fouchi withdraw, and Poucha-Houmma receives the Tchacta envoys. There is an assembly of the tribe, and the Houmma chiefs offer all their treasures for the life of Cala-Be. The Tchactas insist, however, upon the law of retaliation, and Poucha surrenders himself to save his son. The tribe, in consternation, allow their chief to be led away. In the fifth act, Cala-Be returns to submit to his fate, but he only arrives after his father has been put to death, in his place, and he listens with horror to Nachouba's recital of the last moments of Poucha-Houmma.

If we consider that the author of this tragedy was seventy-

eight years old when he wrote it, and if we remember 'Agésilas' and 'Pertharite' of Corneille's old age, we must admit that our first Louisiana drama was, under the circumstances, a work of some merit. At our last Exposition, was the portrait of Mr. de Villeneuve dressed as a Tchacta chief.

In 1839, A. Lussan published in Donaldsonville 'Les Martyrs de la Louisiane,'¹³ a tragedy in five acts. It is worthy of notice, as the personages are the heroes of the Revolution of 1768. The Louisianians could hear on the stage their ancestors uttering words of defiance to O'Reilly and offering their lives for their country. The principal character is Joseph Villeré, father of our second governor, a man of a magnanimous temper. Having heard of the arrest of his friends in New Orleans, he left his plantation to share their fate, and was placed on a frigate, where he was killed by the sentinel on his attempting to run to his wife, whose voice he had recognized. His last words are really fine :

Je te devais mon sang . . . toi . . . que j'ai tant chéoir . . .
 Louisiane adorée . . . ô ma noble patrie . . .
 Dis, si j'ai su garder . . . l'honneur . . . et mon serment . . .
 (Giving his bloody handkerchief to a sailor).
 Pour ma femme . . . elle est là . . . c'est mon dernier présent !

In the last act, Lafrénière and his friends are in prison, and the former says :

Adieu donc à la vie, à cet amour sacré,
 Dans le fond de nos cœurs si longtemps épuré !
 O mon pays ! adieu ! nous tombons sans nous plaindre,
 Si par notre trépas, tes maux doivent s'éteindre.

The conspirators are then led to execution, all of them dressed most elegantly, and Lafrénière exclaims :

Nous sommes prêts, monsieur ! D'aujourd'hui cette enceinte
 Pour la postérité devient illustre et sainte ;
 Et, martyrs du devoir, son burin redouté
 Grave nos noms au seuil de l'immortalité.

This tragedy is of the Romantic school ; the unities of time and place are not observed, and the play seems to be of the style of 'Hernani' and of 'Marion Delorme.' All Louisianians, all Americans will read 'Les Martyrs' with enthusiasm, for it is indeed a most patriotic work.

¹³ A. LUSSAN, 'Martyrs de la Louisiane.' 1 Vol, 8vo, 122 pp. E. Martin and F Prou, Donaldsonville, 1839.

Mr. Lussan's second drama 'Sara, la Juive,' in five acts and in prose hardly deserves to be mentioned.

Among our most popular dramatists is Mr. L. Placide Canonge of L'Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orléans. He wrote the librettos of several operas and many poems which have not been gathered in book form. His two most celebrated works are 'Qui perd gagne,'¹⁴ a comedy in one act and in prose, and 'Le Comte de Carmagnola,'¹⁵ a drama in five acts and in prose. The comedy appeared in 1849, and was dedicated in a very clever letter to Alfred de Musset. The work is a proverb, and Mr. Canonge has succeeded quite well. His comedy is light and witty. A husband wagers with a friend that he will come to a ball with him and leave his young wife at home. The latter has heard their conversation, and induces her husband to play a game of cards with her, on condition that if he loses, he will spend the evening at home. She fenders herself so agreeable during the game that the husband loses on purpose, and then acknowledges that he has played "A qui perd gagne."

"Le Comte de Carmagnola" (1856) was acted several times in New Orleans, and was always seen with pleasure. The subject was well chosen, as the history of the Milanese shepherd who rose to be general-in-chief of Milan and then of Venice, is in itself intensely dramatic. The author supposes that the duchess Beatrice de Tenda, while being led to the scaffold, gives a paper to the young Carmagnola in which she says that Bianca de Visconti is not her daughter, but an illegitimate child of the duke, and that the real heiress to the throne is Michaela, who has been brought up by Carmagnola's father.

Carmagnola is in love with Michaela, and it is in order to recover her crown that he becomes great. A pretty incident in the play is that both daughters of Visconti love Carmagnola, whom the duke fears and hates. The captain, after many thrilling events, falls at Venice in the presence of Michaela and Bianca, who had vainly tried to save him.

This drama, by its numerous incidents, may be reckoned in the class of the 'Trois Mousquetaires' and of the 'Bossu.'

Among our Louisiana authors Dr. Alfred Mercier is one of the best known. He has tried all subjects except history, and

¹⁴ 'Qui Perd Gagne.' 1 Vol. 8vo. Le Courrier de la Louisiane, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1849.

¹⁵ L. PLACIDE CANONGE, 'Le Comte de Carmagnola,' 1 Vol. 8vo, 58 pp. Le Courrier de la Louisiane, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1856.

has succeeded well in every one. He is a dramatist, a poet, a novelist, an essayist, a philosopher and a scientist. His views are always original, and his style, both in poetry and in prose, is elegant and correct.

Dr. Mercier published his first works in Paris in 1842. They comprise 'La Rose de Smyrne,' 'L'Ermite de Niagara' and 'Erato.' I shall mention at present only 'L'Ermite de Niagara,'¹⁶ as it may be ranked as a drama, the author himself calling it a mystery.

Père Daniel, a hermit dwelling among the Tuscaroras, has received in his *ajoupa* (his hut) a stranger, Ellfrid, whom he loves as his son. Adina, a young Indian girl, comes every day to visit the good father, and soon loves the white man. She relates with a charming and almost biblical simplicity her first interview with Ellfrid:

Un jour, j'allais puiser à la source voisine :
C'était un jour superbe, et j'allais en chantant,
Heureuse de l'air frais et d'un ciel éclatant.
Je l'aperçus à l'ombre, auprès de la fontaine,
Aussitôt je me tais, et j'hésite, incertaine
Si je dois avancer, mais avançant toujours.
Il paraissait pensif : ses yeux suivaient le cours
De l'eau qui murmurait à voix plaintive et basse.
En tremblant j'y plongeai ma vide calebasse ;
Il la prit sans rien dire, et sans rien dire encor,
Sur ma tête il la mit pleine jusques au bord.
Moi, je lève les bras pour prendre l'équilibre.
Mais lui, voyant alors que je ne suis plus libre,
Il dépose un baiser sur ma peau qui brûlait.

In the second act, we are introduced to the council of the chiefs, where Maktagol, jealous of Adina's love for Ellfrid, excites the Indians against the pale-face. The warriors attack the young man's hut, but are repulsed, and Ellfrid wanders in the night around the cataract. There, he is met by the genius of the Falls, who, Adamastor-like, addresses him, and exhorts him to go and explore the subterranean palace of the River God, old Niagara. The young man throws himself in the cataract, and sees at the bottom Niagara and his tributaries. The description of the poet is here very fine.

¹⁶ DR. ALFRED MERCIER, 'L'Ermite de Niagara.' 12mo, 176 pp. Jules Labitte, Paris, 1842.

Je ne sais quels rayons éclairent ce lieu pâle,
 Pareils à des reflets d'aurore boréale :
 On dirait qu'une gaze, un crépuscule d'or,
 Tend de plis transparents le profond corridor.

On his return from Niagara's palace, Ellfrid meets Adina, whose joy, on seeing him alive, betrays her love. Père Daniel marries them, and the Indian girls conduct the bride to her hut. During the night, however, the Tuscaroras attack Ellfrid, who is mortally wounded with a poisoned arrow. Adina sucks the blood from the wound, but Ellfrid cannot be saved, and his wife does not survive him.

The plot of this mystery is interesting, and the verses are good. As it is the only work of the kind in our literature, I thought necessary to give some details about it.

The last dramatic work published in book form in Louisiana is a comedy in verse by Dr. C. Deléry, '*L'Ecole du Peuple*.'¹⁷ It is a keen satire of carpet-bag rule in our State, and very entertaining to those who have known the personages who appear on the stage.

Although but few dramas have been published in Louisiana, many good comedies have been written to be played by amateurs. Judge Alfred Roman and Félix Voorhies, of St. Martinville, have probably been the most successful in these "*comédies de salon*."

IV.—POETRY.

Louisiana, with its romantic history, its stately river, its magnificent forests, its luxuriant vegetation, its numerous bayous overshadowed by secular oak-trees, and its picturesque scenery on the coast of the Gulf, seemed to be a fit abode for poets. They were inspired by the climate, by the nature of the country, by patriotism, by the chivalry and bravery of the men, and above all, by the beauty and grace of the women. Our literature, therefore, is rich in poets, richer perhaps than that of any other State. We have many verses published in Louisiana, and probably more still which their authors have not given to the public. Often has the father or the mother recited touching lines, which have been treasured by the children of the family as most precious legacies, and which were yet to remain unseen by alien eyes. I am familiar with many Creole poets whose works,

¹⁷ DR. CHAS. DELÉRY, '*L'Ecole du Peuple*.' 1 Vol. 12mo. Imprimerie du Propagateur Catholique, Nouvelle-Orléans. 1877.

though unknown to the great world of literature, would be read with emotion and pleasure, their themes being the most sacred feelings of humanity. Indeed, the gift of verse seems a not uncommon endowment among a people characterized by so much sensibility and vivacity as our Creoles. Of the poems published by my countrymen, I regret to say that I have not read all. In spite of their merit, the works of Louisianians are now rare in our State, and many of them I have not been able to procure.

Among our earliest poets is Mr. Tullius St. Céran, who wrote 'Rien-ou Moi,'¹⁸ in 1837, and 'Mil huit cent quatorze et mil huit cent quinze,'¹⁹ in 1838. In this author we find a lively imagination and the greatest enthusiasm for his subject. His poetic talent cannot be said to have been of a high order, but his works may be read with interest, as they show a sincere patriotism, and give an idea of the feelings of the time.

Another work of great local interest is an epic poem in ten cantos by Urbain David, of Cette, a resident of Louisiana. The book, like that of Mr. St. Céran, was inspired by the glorious events of 1815 and is entitled 'Les Anglais à la Louisiane en 1814 et 1815.'²⁰ The history of Packenham's defeat is related with some force and with many details which must be pleasing to the descendants of the heroes of the battle of New Orleans.

In 1846, there appeared in New Orleans a poetical journal called 'Le Taenarion.'²¹ Mr. Félix de Courmont took the satirical pen and wrote several satires which were severely criticized. It is amusing to read the defence of the author; his replies are sometimes quite correct, but he generally allows himself to be carried away by his passion, forgetting that it is as natural to be criticized as to be praised. Mr. de Courmont was neither a Juvenal, a Horace, nor a Boileau, and it is with pleasure that we turn from his satires to his minor pieces. 'Le Morne Vert,' 'L'Amour,' 'Le Dernier des Caraïbes' are really graceful poems.

¹⁸ TULLIUS ST. CÉRAN, 'Rien-ou Moi.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 194 pp. G. Bruslé, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1837.

¹⁹ Mil huit cent quatorze et Mil huit cent quinze.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 51 pp. Gaux et Cie, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1838.

²⁰ URBAIN DAVID, 'Les Anglais à la Louisiane en 1814 et 1815.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 60 pp. Nouvelle-Orléans, 1845.

²¹ FÉLIX DE COURMONT, 'Le Taenarion.' 1 Vol. 8vo. Gaux and Cie., Nouvelle-Orléans, 1846-47.

'Les Vagabondes'²² by Camille Thierry, contains some charming verses. 'L'Amant du Corsaire' begins thus :

Petit oiseau de mer, toi qui reviens sans doute
D'un rivage lointain,
Oh ! dis-moi, n'as-tu pas rencontré sur ta route
Le svelte brigantin.

'Mariquita la Calentura' is a work of touching melancholy ; it speaks of a poor woman, legendary in New Orleans, pursued in the streets by the *gamins*, and who had once been a beautiful Spanish girl :

Tu parlais de l'amant fidèle,
De l'Espagnol qui, chaque soir,
Agrafait sa légère échelle
Aux murs vieillis de ton manoir.

'Les Cenelles,'²³ a word which signifies a small berry, is a collection of poems which are of some merit. The authors are Valcour, Boise, Dalcour, Dauphin, Desbrosses, Lanusse, Liotau, Riquet, St. Pierre, Thierry, and Victor Séjour, whose work 'Le Retour de Napoléon' was favorably received in France.

Mr. Constant Lepouzé,²⁴ a Frenchman residing in Louisiana for twenty years, may be considered one of our most correct and classical poets ; he translated beautifully the odes of Horace and his ninth satire, 'Le Fâcheux.' It is to be regretted that Mr. Lepouzé's translations are so little known, for the author must have been a remarkable Latin scholar.

'Les Lazaréennes,'²⁵ 'Fables et Chansons, Poésies Sociales,' by Joseph Déjacque, is the only work of its kind published in Louisiana, where, I may add, it had very little success, although it contains poems of no little literary merit. The author seems to have been a socialist, and in his book attacks the family ties and property, repeating with emphasis Proudhon's celebrated words : "La propriété, c'est le vol." This is the only work published in Louisiana which speaks unfavorably of our city and its inhabitants ; the others evince a most sincere patriotism. Mr. Déjacque had talent, as can be seen from the following lines : 'D'Esprit Rebelle à Malin Esprit.'

²² CAMILLE THIERRY, 'Les Vagabondes.' 1 Vol. 12mo. Paris.

²³ 'Les Cenelles.' 1 Vol. 16mo. Nouvelle-Orléans.

²⁴ CONSTANT LEPOUZÉ, Poésies Diverses. 1 Vol. 8vo, 188 pp. Bruslé and Lesseps, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1838.

²⁵ JOSEPH DÉJACQUE, 'Les Lazaréennes, etc.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 199 pp. J. Lamarre, Nouvelle Orléans, 1857.

Il semble qu'une Fée, à titre d'apanage,
 A sur vous, blond lutin, semé ses dons d'amour,
 Qu'elle a d'un diamant formé votre visage,
 Et dérobé vos yeux au tendre émail du jour !
 Que des plus belles fleurs exprimant les fluides,
 Elle en fit une argile et modela vos chairs,
 Ou bien,—comme Cypris, de ses langes humides,—
 Qu'elle vous a tirée, autre perle ! des mers.

During our civil war, Mars and Bellona, as the poets would say, had chased away Apollo and the Muses, and but one poem, inspired by the war, was produced. It is 'Les Némésiennes Confédérées'²⁶ (1863) by Dr. C. Deléry. The work, as was to be expected, is most bitter against the Federals, and stigmatizes General Butler.

We have one specimen of didactic poetry in Louisiana, 'Homo,'²⁷ by Mr. Chas. Oscar Dugué, a well written poem in seven cantos, but which is of little interest, and no more read than 'La Religion,' 'La Navigation,' or 'Les Jardins.' Mr. Dugué also published, under the title of 'Essais Poétiques,' a volume of poetry said to be very good. Unfortunately, I could not procure a copy of the work.

It is with pleasure that, according to the division of my subject, I return to Dr. Alfred Mercier's poetical works: 'La Rose de Smyrne'²⁸ and 'Erato.' The former is a graceful and touching *orientale*, and relates the love of Hatilda, the Moslem's wife, for a young and beautiful *giaour* and the sad fate of the lovers. The introduction of this work is another proof of the intense love of all Louisianians for their State :

D'où vient donc cette voix qui me traverse l'âme,
 Comme passe le soir la brise sur la lame ;
 Vague comme le son que soupire à longs traits,
 La harpe éolienne au milieu des forêts ?
 C'est la voix du passé, cette voix caressante
 Qui parle au voyageur de la patrie absente.
 Une ombre, un mot, que sais-je, un rien l'éveille en nous.
 Ainsi, doux souvenirs, toujours me suivrez-vous ?
 Oh ! maintenant, tandis que sous ce ciel de brume
 Entre mes doigts glacés je sens frémir ma plume,
 Sous ce ciel, où juillet est plus froid à Paris
 Que ne le fut jamais décembre en mon pays.

²⁶ DR. C. DELÉRY, 'Les Némésiennes Confédérées.' 1 Vol. 16mo. Mobile, 1863.

²⁷ CHAS. OSCAR DUGUÉ, 'Homo.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 205 pp. Paul Daffis, Paris, 1872.

²⁸ DR. ALFRED MERCIER, 'La Rose de Smyrne.' 'Erato.' 12mo, 103 pp. Jules Labitte, Paris, 1842.

'Erato' is a collection of short poems, of which the best are 'Sur Mer,' 'Patrie' and 'La Lune des Fleurs à la Louisiane.' I cannot resist the temptation of giving a few lines of 'Patrie':

Après huit ans écoulés dans l'absence,
 Je viens revoir le ciel de mes aïeux :
 Doux souvenirs de mon heureuse enfance,
 Apparaissent un moment à mes yeux !
 Voici mon fleuve aux vagues solennelles :
 En demi-lune il se courbe en passant,
 Et la cité, comme un aiglou naissant,
 A son flanc gauche étend ses jeunes ailes.
 * * * * *
 Après huit ans écoulés dans l'absence,
 Fidèle oiseau je reviens à mon nid ;
 Le souvenir vaut parfois l'espérance :
 C'est un doux songe où l'âme rajeunit.

Scarron, the first husband of Mme. de Maintenon, whose sole title to a pension was to be "le malade de la reine," found the time, in spite of his sufferings, to write 'L'Enéide Travestie' and to ridicule the heroes of antiquity. His was not a touching note, and the song of his poetic lyre had no pathos. If his body was affected, his mind did not seem to suffer, very different in this from Gilbert and Millevoye, whose beautiful elegies one cannot read without being deeply moved. Louisiana had her Gilbert, her Millevoye; his talent was of the highest order, and his tender and melancholy verses can well be compared to 'Le Poète Mourant' and 'La Chute des Feuilles.' It was in 1841 that Alexandre Latil published his 'Ephémères, Essais Poétiques.'²⁹ The author was an invalid and a prey to an incurable disease, and his poems are a lamentation and a prayer. Very often did the pen fall from the weak hand, while from the heart were surging his rhythmical complaints. The preface to the work is exceedingly well written; it is a protest against the modern school and, at the same time, an affectionate dedication of his verses to his countrymen. The book was well received in Louisiana, and Alexandre Latil's name will be long remembered as that of our most sympathetic poet. Among the 'Ephémères,' I have noticed 'Amour et Douleur,' 'Déception et Tristesse,' 'Désenchantement,' 'A mon Grand-père,' and 'A mon Père et à ma Mère,' the dirge of the poet:

²⁹ ALEXANDRE LATIL, 'Les Ephémères, Essais Poétiques.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 198 pp. Alfred Moret, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1814.

Encore un dernier chant, et ma lyre éphémère
 S'échappe de mes mains, et s'éteint en ce jour,
 Mais que ces sons mourants, ô mon père, ma mère !
 Soient exhalés pour vous, objets de mon amour.
 De cet hymne d'adieu si la note plaintive
 S'envole tristement pour ne plus revenir,
 Vous ne l'oublierez pas ; votre oreille attentive
 L'empreindra pour jamais dans votre souvenir.

* * * * *
 Hélas ! si du tombeau perçant l'étroit espace,
 Mon nom pouvait, un jour, voler à l'avenir,
 Il irait, parcourant sa lumineuse trace,
 De vos douces vertus graver le souvenir.

Dans son sillon de gloire à travers tous les âges,
 Il parlerait de vous aux êtres généreux ;
 Il leur dirait combien furent nobles et sages
 Les sentiments divers de vos cœurs vertueux. . .
 Mais non ! le faible accord de ma lyre plaintive
 Expire autour de moi sans produire d'échos.
 Ainsi soupire et meurt la brise fugitive
 Qui d'un lac azuré vient caresser les flots.

Ah ! si l'affreux oubli dans son linceul immense
 Ensevelit bientôt et mon nom et mes vers,
 Je conserve, du moins, la touchante espérance
 Qu'ils seront à vos cœurs toujours présents et chers.

One of our most prolific writers is Dr. Chas. Testut ;³⁰ he tried poetry and prose, but has a greater reputation as a poet than as a novelist. His small volume, 'Les Echos,' contains many pieces written in all kinds of rhythms. One can see that the author is a thorough master of versification, and whether he tries the Alexandrine, or the short verse, even the four foot verse, his poetry is always correct and natural, and the rhymes are remarkably rich. Dr. Testut is a striking example of the generally unsuccessful practical life of a poet ; he is now quite old, and although he has written many volumes and been much admired, he is now, after fifty years residence in New Orleans, in a position to which a man of his talent should not have been reduced. His poems are graceful and usually sad, and his subjects are principally meditations or descriptions of touching domestic scenes. His verses to Latil are among his finest, and also 'La Dernière Heure du Condamné,' 'Le Jour des Morts' and 'Aux Jeunes Filles,' from which I take the following lines :

³⁰ DR. CHAS. TESTUT, 'Les Echos.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 204 pp. H. Méridier. Nouvelle Orléans, 1849.

Si vous saviez quel rêve, ô jeunes filles,
 Nous jette au coeur votre regard si doux ;
 Comme souvent, au bruit de vos mantilles,
 Nous tomberions muets à vos genoux !
 Si vous saviez, quand votre front balance
 Les songes d'or cachés dans votre oeil noir,
 Quels chants d'amour tout remplis d'espérance
 Nous confions à la brise du soir. . .
 Si vous saviez comme, au front des poètes,
 Vos beaux noms d'ange allument des rayons ;
 Comme nos voix à vous chanter sont prêtes,
 Comme pour vous, loin des yeux, nous prions !
 Nos premiers chants, notre premier délire
 Viennent de vous comme l'air vient des cieux ;
 Et des doux sons qu'exhale notre lyre,
 Nous vous devons les plus harmonieux.

In our Creole population, many ladies write French admirably, but through a mistaken sense of modesty, their works have not been published. It was not possible, however, in the nineteenth century, where women, in Europe and in America, have shown themselves equal to men in mental ability, that no poetical work written by a woman should be published by a Louisiana lady. It is, therefore, with the greatest pleasure that I read 'Une couronne Blanche, Roman poétique,' by Mrs. Emilie Evershed.³¹ Don Fernand de Herès, after a life of dissipation, marries a very young girl whom he loves, but whom his jealousy renders unhappy. A child is born, and is the consolation of the countess ; every day, over the little cradle a white wreath is placed, emblem of innocence and piety. The infancy of the child is beautifully described, and we look with joy at the little thing, when she tries her first steps, and when she fondly caresses her mother. One day, a little girl knocks at the gate of the palace ; her name is Rosita, and she is blind. She pronounces the word Dolora and holds a picture in her hand. The countess understands the sad story : on her death bed, Dolora, the victim, sends her child to her father. The injured wife pardons the guilty husband and receives Rosita as her daughter. She and Biancha are brought up together, but when the white wreath is placed on Bianca's forehead for her first communion she dies, and "la couronne blanche" is deposited on her tomb. Is not this plot of a romance simple and poetic,

³¹ MME. EMILIE EVERSLED, 'Une Couronne Blanche.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 263 pp. H. Bossange, Paris, 1859.

and do we not recognize the delicate touch of a woman in those charming pictures ?

Quand je ne pleure plus. . . je vois ces jours heureux
Où je pouvais baiser tes chers petits pieds roses,
Et tes petites mains, et tes lèvres mi-closes ;
J'effeuille en souvenir tous ces biens précieux !
Parfois je rêve encor tes premières caresses,
Et tes premiers baisers, et puis tes petits bras
S'attachant à mon cou. . . je suis tes premiers pas ! . . .
Mais pour ces biens perdus, je n'ai que mes tristesses.
Est-ce donc murmurer, Dieu qui brisez mon cœur ?
Vous me l'aviez donnée et vous l'avez reprise
Ma douce fleur du ciel, pur souffle de la brise :
Est-ce donc murmurer un long cri de douleur ?

'Les Epaves, par Un Louisianais,'³² a volume large and well bound, published in 1847, is now before me. According to the editors, the manuscript was found in a trunk saved from the wreck of "l'Hécla," a steamboat on the Mississippi river. Although a well known Louisianian was supposed to be the author, the name of the poet was never positively ascertained.

The work comprises many poems written in a lively and witty manner, but what is of greater interest than the original verses of "Un Louisianais" is his translation of the epigrams of Martial, which may be compared to Lepouzé's translation of Horace, mentioned above.

We now see the names of two brothers more widely known outside of Louisiana than any other of our poets: Dominique and Adrien Rouquette.³³ To them may truly be applied the "poeta nascitur, non fit." From their earliest youth, they held in their hands the lute and the lyre, and in old age, the language of poetry seems to be natural to them. Only yesterday, I met Dominique Rouquette and, on my asking him a few questions about his works, he began reciting with the fire and enthusiasm of a young man some of his favorite verses, and I could not help admiring the old bard's real love for his art. Poetry was a passion in the two brothers, and both have written many poems. Born in Louisiana, they were educated in France, in the old Armorica, the land of druidical legends, where everything recalled poetical souvenirs. On their return

³² 'Les Epaves, par Un Louisianais.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 388 pp. H. Bossange, Paris, 1847.

³³ DOMINIQUE ROUQUETTE, 'Les Meschacébéennes.' 1 Vol. 16mo, 159 pp. Paris, 1838.

—, 'Fleurs d'Amérique.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 303 pp. H. Méridier, Nouvelle Orléans, 1859.

to their native State, they lived in solitary Bonfouca, in the magnificent pine forests watered by those romantic rivulets, the Tchefuncte, the Bogue-Falaya and Bayou Lacombe. Around them were the remnants of the Chactas, the faithful allies of the French ; and in the wigwams of the Indians, the brothers used to sit to smoke the calumet with the chiefs, or to look at the silent squaws skillfully weaving the wicker baskets which they were to sell the next morning at the noisy "Marché Français." It is thus that Adrien and Dominique Rouquette learned how to love nature and solitude, and that they were impregnated with the sentiment of poetry. When they write about the prairies, and the forests and the Indians, their descriptions are most realistic, and it seems to us that we see the graceful Chactas girl in her canoe or swimming in the limpid waters of the bayous, that we hear the cry of the whip-poor-will, and that we are permeated with the perfume of the *mélèze*, of the *bois-fort* and of the resinous pine tree.

We may perhaps regret that the brothers Rouquette did not vary their themes a little more, but their poems have "*un goût du terroir*" which cannot fail to be appreciated.

Dominique Rouquette's first work was 'Les Meschacébéennes' published in 1838. He published also in 1857 a large volume 'Fleurs d'Amérique.' I shall quote only a few lines of the latter :

LE SOIR.

Déjà dans les buissons dort la grive bâtarde :
 La voix du bûcheron, qui dans les bois s'attarde,
 A travers les grands pins se fait entendre au loin ;
 Aux boeufs libres du joug ayant donné le foin,
 Sifflant une chanson, le charretier regagne
 Sa cabane où l'attend une noire compagne,
 Et fume taciturne, accroupi sur un banc,
 Sa pipe, aux longs reflets du mélèze flambant.
 Loin de l'humide abri des joncs qu'elle abandonne,
 La moustique partout et voltige et bourdonne,
 Et nocturne taureau caché dans le limon,
 La grenouille bovine enfle un rauque poumon. . . .
 Un silence imposant et formidable plane
 Sur les eaux, la forêt et la noire savane ;
 La nuit, comme l'upas, sous une ombre de mort,
 Semble couvrir au loin la terre qui s'endort.

Adrien Rouquette is a priest ; his principal work is 'Les

Savanes,'³⁴ a book of poems on Louisiana subjects. He has also written 'l'Antoniade ou la Solitude avec Dieu,'³⁵ a long eremitic poem from which I take the following patriotic lines :

Amérique, ô patrie ! Amérique, ô ma mère !
 S'il est un de tes fils assez lâche et vulgaire,
 Pour t'entendre offenser et pour te renier,,
 Seul sans pleurs, sans regrets, qu'il meure tout entier !
 Que son nom effacé des pages de l'histoire,
 Effacé de tout cœur et de toute mémoire,
 Entorué du linceul d'un éternel oubli,
 Dans la nuit du tombeau descende enseveli !

The following extract from 'les Savanes' is very fine :

L'ARBRE DES CHACTAS.

C'était un arbre immense ; arbre aux rameaux sans nombre,
 Qui sur tout un désert projetait sa grande ombre.
 Ses racines, plongeant dans un sol sablonneux,
 Rejaillissaient partout, boas aux mille noeuds ;
 Et, se gonflant à l'oeil, comme d'énormes veines,
 Ou eût dit d'un haut-bord les cables et les chaînes.
 Arbre immense et géant, les arbres les plus hauts
 A son pied s'inclinaient comme des arbrisseaux.
 Déployant dans les cieux sa vaste et noire cime,
 Il s'y plaisait aux chocs que l'ouragan imprime.
 De sa circonférence embrassant l'horizon,
 Sous son dôme sonore, en l'ardente saison,
 Il pouvait abriter, endormis sur les herbes,
 Tout le peuple chactas et ses troupeaux superbes.

* * * * *
 Puis, autour de cet arbre, arbre aux rameaux immenses,
 Voltigeaient colibris, aux changeantes nuances ;
 Papes verts, geais d'azur, flamboyants cardinaux,
 Nuages d'oiseaux blancs et de noirs étourneaux
 Et leurs plumes semblaient d'éblouissantes pierres !
 Et l'aigle, en les voyant, eût baissé les paupières ! . . .

* * * * *
 Eh bien ! cet arbre-roi, ce géant des forêts,
 Cette arche, celle échelle aux infinis degrés,
 Un homme aux muscles forts, un homme à rude tâche,
 Suant des mois entiers, l'abattit de sa hache !
 Il l'abattit enfin ; et puis, s'assit content ;
 Car, dans l'arbre, il voyait quelques pièces d'argent !

* * * * *

³⁴ ADRIEN ROUQUETTE, 'Les Savanes.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 306 pp. Jules Labitte, Paris. Alfred Moret, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1841.

³⁵ ———, 'L'Antoniade.' 1 Vol. 8vo. L. Marchand, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1860.

Mais si tu fus vainqueur de l'arbre des Chactas,
 Impie, il en est un que tu n'abattras pas ;
 Un arbre bien plus haut, bien plus fort, et dont l'ombre
 Couvre l'Eden si frais et l'univers si sombre.
 Et cet arbre est celui que Dieu même planta,
 L'arbre saint de la Croix ; l'arbre du Golgotha ;
 L'arbre que l'homme en vain frappe aussi de sa hache ;
 Il le frappe en tous points, et rien ne s'en détache ;
 Rien ; car l'arbre toujours, gigantesque, éternel,
 S'élance, et va se perdre aux abîmes du ciel !

We had also in Louisiana, besides the authors whom I have mentioned, some poets whose works I could not procure, among whom are Alexandre Barde, Duperron, Guirot, and Calongue. In the different poems which I have read their names are mentioned quite favorably ; Mr. Barde seems to have been the best.

Of the poets whose works have not been published, Anatole Cousin, Valérien Allain and Euphémon La Branche were the most popular.

In speaking of our Louisiana authors, I do not refer to those who have left our State, such as Albert Delpit, Henri Vignaud and Mme. Hélène Allain.

In concluding this review of our poets, I think that it can truly be said that a selection of their works would compare favorably with those of many authors, whose reputation is much greater.

V.—NOVELS.

It is extraordinary that with her romantic history our State did not produce more works of fiction. The romances of Louisiana have not yet been written in prose, although our poetic scenery has inspired many a songster. We have, however, a few novelists, whose success should have encouraged others to follow their example.

I have read two novels of Dr. C. Testut : 'Le Vieux Salcmou'³⁶ and 'Les Filles de Monte Cristo.' The former is intended to represent scenes of plantation life, and was written in 1858, but published only in 1873. It is to be regretted that the author, in his pity for the institution of slavery, should have introduced in his work a planter worthy of Mrs. Beecher

³⁶ DR. C. TESTUT, 'Le Vieux Salcmou.' 1 Vol. 4to, 176 pp. Nouvelle-Orléans, 1872.

'Les Filles de Monte-Cristo,' Pamphlet form. 8vo, 520 pp. Imprimerie Cosmopolite, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1876.

Stowe's *Legree*, presenting thus as a type what was really an exception, a planter cruel to his slaves.

'*Les Filles de Monte Cristo*' is a continuation of Dumas' admirable epic, and has a moral purpose. In the original novel, Dantes the millionaire, appears as inexorable as fate, and punishes sternly and without pity, rewarding sometimes, but those always who had been good to the poor sailor boy. In the sequel, Monte Cristo devotes his immense fortune to aiding all who are unhappy. Having lost Haydée, he returns to France, after an absence of twenty years, with his daughters, Mercés and Gemma. On meeting his Mercedes, his old passion returns, and the beautiful *Catalane* becomes his wife. Surrounded and assisted by all those whom he had saved formerly, Dantes now forms an association of which the aim will be to look for misery and relieve the unfortunates. Mercés and Gemma, from fear of being loved for their money, live as *ouvrières* for some time and are married to two deserving young men. They and their husbands help Monte Cristo in his great undertaking, and every day some wretch is reconciled to life. At last, Mercedes dies, and the count soon follows to the grave his adored one. Their bodies are conveyed to the isle of Monte Cristo, and the filial piety of the daughters transforms into a blooming oasis the barren rock, where had landed, so many years before, the escaped prisoner of the "Château d'If."

One can see in Dr. Testut's book a generous idea and an ardent love for everything good and true, and many incredible events and visionary ideas may be pardoned when one remembers that the author was inspired by a genuine philanthropy.

Mme. S. de la Houssaye,³⁷ of the Attakapas, a member of one of our oldest families, is another of our lady writers. She has published several novels in the papers of her parish, and she is said to be preparing for a Paris editor a work on Louisiana, for which she is well qualified on account of her lively imagination and her numerous family traditions. Her most interesting novel is '*Le Mari de Marguerite*,' published in "*l'Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orléans*" in 1883, as a *feuilleton*. It is the story of a spoilt and vain Virginia girl, proud of her grandfather's plantation and fortune, and dreaming only of heroes of romance. She discards her cousin and intended husband at the sight of a

³⁷ MME. S. DE LA HOUSSAYE, '*Le Mari de Marguerite*,' *Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orléans*, 1883.

handsome man, and abandons her home to follow him to New England. Very soon, however, she regrets the luxury of her Virginia life and treats her husband most unkindly. The great civil war breaks out, and Wm. Gray is reported to have been killed. Then begins the punishment of Marguerite: her grandfather dies in a battles and she loses her fortune. Reduced to poverty, the frail southern girl, like so many noble women, shows an indomitable energy, finally becoming a governess. Her husband returns under an assumed name and refuses to recognize her; he is at last touched by her love and sorrow, and they both live happily in the old family mansion recovered from the Federals.

The story is quite romantic, and the style is good.

Father Rouquette published in 1879, '*La Nouvelle Atala*,'³⁸ an Indian legend. The work is admirably written, and one can see the great enthusiasm of the author for his subject. As in '*l'Antoniade*,' father Rouquette speaks of solitary life, and exalts the sacrifice of a young girl who leaves the world to live in a forest. The descriptions of nature are very poetic, and Chatah-Ima's *Atala* is no unworthy sister of Chateaubriand's.

Dr. Alfred Mercier's first work of fiction, '*Le Fou de Palerme*,'³⁹ is a novelette, in which is related a touching love story. The plot is very simple, but at the same time attractive.

'*La Fille du Prêtre*' is a work of great philosophy; the author attacks the celibacy of priests with as much vehemence as George Sand had attacked confession in '*Mademoiselle de sa Quintinie*.' The novel is divided into three parts: "*Fausse Route, Expiation, Réhabilitation*." A young man, Théotime de Kermarec, is forced into the priesthood by his parents, and, shortly after, succumbs to his passions. His victim, Jeanne Dubayle, flees from her home, and writes to her lover that she is going to die. Théotime, in despair, abandons the priesthood, and wants to sacrifice his life for a noble cause, the independence of Italy. He joins Garibaldi's army and behaves as a hero. After the fall of the kingdom of Naples, he takes part in a revolt of Poland against Russia, is taken prisoner and sent to

³⁸ ADRIEN ROUQUETTE, '*La Nouvelle Atala*.' 1 Vol. 16mo, 138 pp. Propagateur Catholique, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1879.

³⁹ DR. ALFRED MERCIER, '*Le Fou de Palerme*.' 1 Vol. 16mo, 140 pp. Nouvelle-Orléans, 1873.

—, '*La Fille du Prêtre*.' 3 Vol. 8vo. Imprimerie Cosmopolite, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1877.

Siberia. This is *Expiation*. *Réhabilitation* must soon follow, for Théotime has suffered and his crime has been forgiven.

Jeanne had not killed herself, for while in the act of throwing herself in the Seine, she is saved by maternal love for her unborn babe. She becomes the friend of Louise, a woman who is in the same position as herself, and both go to the hospital, where a young physician, Ludovic, takes the greatest interest in Jeanne. The description of the hospital and the philosophical thoughts inspired by it have merit, and can be compared to the like scene in 'Les Mystères de Paris.' Jeanne dies and leaves a daughter, Jeannette, who is adopted by Ludovic.

Many years passed, and France has been vanquished at Sedan, and the Commune has begun its atrocious deeds in Paris. Théotime is a captain in the army of Versailles, when the capital is taken. There is a terrible fight in a cemetery, and Ludovic, Louise and Jeannette are engaged in it. Théotime saves his daughter without knowing her, and after the war, goes to Italy. He finally finds Jeannette, marries her to Ludovic, and is rehabilitated by paternal love.

I give the entire plot of this work, because it created quite a sensation in New Orleans, where there are so many Catholics. Whether Dr. Mercier was right or wrong in his crusade against celibacy does not concern us; but we must admit that he handled his lance fearlessly and well.

'L'Habitation St. Ybars'⁴⁰ is a Louisiana story, in which life before the war on a large sugar plantation is very well described. Although the work is of great interest as a novel, it is of still greater importance for the study of philology. Dr. Mercier, who is a master of the Negro-French or creole patois, uses it freely in his book and keeps thus an admirable *couleur locale*. The following extract is really charming for its simplicity and truth:

"Démon, St. Ybars' little boy, comes into the kitchen with a cage, and Mamrie, the old nurse, tells him: "Asteur assite lá é conté moin coman to fé pou trapé pap laïé."

* * * * *

"Démon termina son épopée, en accompagnant sa parole de grands gestes qui épouvantèrent les oiseaux; le mâle renouvela ses efforts pour passer à travers les barreaux de sa prison; sa

⁴⁰ 'L'Habitation St. Ybars.' 1 Vol. 12mo, 231 pp. Eug. Antoine, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1881.

tête était en sang. Démon le repoussa à l'intérieur, en disant avec impatience :

Resté don tranqui, bête !

To bon toi, lui dit Mamrie ; to oté li so la-liberté é to oulé li contan. Mo sré voudré oua ça to sré di, si yé té mété toi dan ain lacage comme ça.

Mété moin dan ain lacage ! s'écria Démon sur le ton de la fierté indignée ; mo sré cacé tou, mo sré sorti é mo sré vengé moin sur moune laïé ki té emprisonnin moin.

Ah ! ouëtte, tou ça cé bon pour la parol, répliqua Mamrie ; si yé té mété toi dan ain bon lacage avé bon baro en fer, to sré pa cacé arien ; to sré mété en san, épi comme to sré oua ça pa servi ain brin, to sré courbé to latéte é to sré resté tranqui comme pap là va fé dan eune ou deu jou.

Non ! repartit Démon, mo sré laissé moin mouri de faim.

Ça cé ain bel réponse, dit Mamrie ; to fier même ! to pa ain St. Ybars pou arien.

La malheureux pape, brisé de fatigue était affaîssé sur ses pattes ; sa poitrine se gonflait douloureusement ; ses yeux noirs étincelaient de colère. Sa femelle, réfugiée dans un coin, faisait entendre de petits cris plaintifs, Après un moment de silence, Démon dit :

Mamrie, ga comme fumel là triste.

Cé pa étonnan, reprit la bonne négresse, lapé pensé à so piti ! yé faim, yapé pélé yé moman ; mé moman va pli vini ; cé lachouette ou kèke serpen ka vini é ka mangé yé. Démon devint pensif. Tandis que sa nourrice voyait à une chose ou à une autre, il contemplait ses prisonniers. Il se leva, et sortit sans rien dire. Au bout de quelques minutes, Mamrie le vit rentrer ; son trébuchet était vide.

Eben ! dit-elle d'un air étonné, "coté to zozos." Une fausse honte empêcha Démon de dire ce qui en était ; il répondit d'une voix mal assurée : "Yé chapé."

"Yé chapé ? reprit Mamrie en secouant la tête, to menti ! mo parié to rende yé la liberté.

"Eben ! cé vrai, avoua Démon, cé vou faute ; ça vou di moin su fumel là é so piti té fé moin la peine."

Les yeux de Mamrie se remplirent de larmes ; elle tendit les bras à Démon en lui montrant toutes ses dents et en disant :

"Vini icite, célera ! vini mo mangé toi tou cru."

It is a pity that 'l'Habitation St. Ybars' has not been

translated into English, for it is a much more correct picture of Louisiana life than is to be found in many other works better known outside of our State.

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

Under this title we may mention a collection of thoughts and maxims of different writers, prepared by L. N. Fouché.⁴¹ It is the only work of its kind published in Louisiana, and contains some maxims of real philosophy.

'Les Yankees Fondateurs de l'Esclavage aux Etats-Unis et Initiateurs du Droit de Sécession,' by Dr. C. Deléry,⁴² was written like 'les Némésiennes Confédérées' during the war, and is of course a party work.

Not only did father Rouquette write 'l'Antoniade' and 'la Nouvelle Atala' in which he describes the charms of solitary life, but in 1852 he had produced 'la Thébaïde en Amérique ou Apologie de la Vie Solitaire et Contemplative.'⁴³ I must admit that, in spite of the numerous quotations from the fathers of the church and the piety of the author, the book had no attractions for me, and that I found it most dry and uninteresting, and better suited to the monks of the middle ages than to the christians of the nineteenth century.

'Gombo Zhèbes,' by Mr. Lafcadio Hearn,⁴⁴ is a dictionary of Creole proverbs selected from six Creole dialects. I have read with pleasure the fifty-one proverbs in our Louisiana patois. The translations in English and in French are very accurate. Major John Augustin has published in the *Times-Democrat*⁴⁵ some charming Creole songs.

Our literature for the last ten years is contained almost exclusively in three large volumes, 'Les Comptes-Rendus de l'Athénée Louisianais,'⁴⁶ the journal of a society established in order to encourage the study of the French language and literature. It is almost impossible to mention all the papers

⁴¹ L. N. FOUCHÉ, 'Nouveau Recueil de Pensées.' 1 Vol. 18mo, 144 pp. Capo. Nouvelle Orléans, 1882.

⁴² DR. CHARLES DELÉRY, 'Les Yankees Fondateurs de l'Esclavage aux Etats-Unis et Initiateurs du Droit de Sécession.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 31 pp. Paris, 1864

⁴³ ADRIEN ROUQUETTE, 'La Thébaïde en Amérique.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 144 pp. H. Méridier, Nouvelle Orléans, 1852.

⁴⁴ LAFCADIO HEARN, 'Gombo Zhèbes.' 1 Vol. 8vo, 42 pp. W. H. Coleman, New York, 1885.

⁴⁵ JOHN AUGUSTIN, 'Creole Songs.' *Times-Democrat*.

⁴⁶ 'Comptes-Rendus de l'Athénée Louisianais.' 1 Vol. 4to, 518 pp. 1876-1881. 1 Vol. 8vo, 718 pp. 1882-1884. 1 Vol. 8vo, 521 pp. 1885-1886.

published in the 'Comptes-Rendus.' Many of them are works of great value. I notice in the first volume: 'Chroniques Indiennes,' by Dr. C. Deléry. 'Souvenir,' a touching Indian story, and 'de l'Interjection Ha! Ah!' by Dr. C. Turpin; 'Cession de la Louisiane à la France' and 'Esquisse biographique de John Rutledge' by Hon. C. Gayarré; 'Emploi des Torpilles, Batteries blindées, et Canons rayés à Charleston' by Gen. Beauregard; 'de la Poésie dans l'Histoire et de quelques Problèmes sociaux' by Mr. C. Bléton; 'de l'H dite aspirée' by Dr. Dupaquier; 'La Tarentule' by Dr. Havà; 'Etude sur les Eclairs' by Dr. Alfred Mercier, and by the same author an interesting paper on 'la Langue Créole;' 'Elle,' a poem by Mr. J. Gentil. It is with particular pleasure that I mention 'Etude sur Racine' by Miss Léona Queyrouze, a work of literary criticism which excited the highest opinion of the author's talent. Mr. O. Debouchel contributes several pretty fables, and Mr. George Des-sommes, many poems, of which 'Geoffroy le Troubadour' is a charming romance of the times of Chivalry.

In volume II. of *l'Athénée* I note Dr. O. Huard's remarkable paper, 'De l'Utilité de la Langue Française aux Etats-Unis;' 'Longfellow,' by Jas. S. Hosmer; 'Un Ancêtre de la Sainte Alliance' by Mr. P. V. Bernard; 'Cent huit Ans' by Mr. B. Rouen; 'Le Matin,' poésie by Dr. Alf. Mercier; and two lectures, one classical by Dr. Mercier, 'La Femme dans les Poèmes d'Homère,' and one philosophical, 'l'Indulgence,' by Miss Queyrouze. In this volume also, is a poem on La Salle by my old father, Mr. Florent Fortier. May it be permitted to his son to inscribe in the 'Transactions' of our society the verses of one who was so dear to him, and who was a true representative of our Creole planters, whom the war had ruined, but who were to the last energetic and noble.

LA SALLE. (1682-1882).

Quel est donc ce héros, ce fils de l'ancien monde,
 Qui bravant la tempête et la fureur de l'onde,
 Argonaute nouveau, sur des bords inconnus,
 A planté son drapeau? Deux cents ans révolus
 L'ont vu s'agenouillant sur la terre étrangère,
 Offrir d'abord à Dieu sa fervente prière,
 Et prenant du Sauveur le symbole adoré
 L'élever vers le ciel dans un concert sacré.
 Vous l'avez tous nommé : Ce héros, c'est Lasalle !

Lasalle, dont la gloire est pour nous sans rivale,
 Si le Seigneur créant un miracle nouveau,
 Te faisait, aujourd'hui, sortir de ton tombeau,
 Quel sentiment d'orgueil gonflerait ta poitrine,
 En voyant les bienfaits de sa grâce divine.
 Ce fleuve, malgré lui, retenu sur ses bords,
 Faisant pour les briser d'inutiles efforts,
 Dompté par le génie, et portant sur son onde,
 Dans des palais flottants, tous les trésors du monde.
 Ces cités, ces palais, ces églises, ces tours,
 Remplaçant le wigwam disparu pour toujours.
 Et ton nom, prononcé dans la langue chérie,
 Par les fils descendants de ta noble patrie.
 Ce nom ne mourra pas, et tu verras demain
 Tous les peuples unis, se tenant par la main,
 Le cœur rempli d'amour, relever sur la plage,
 Cette croix, que jadis tu plaçais au rivage,
 Et qui pourra redire aux peuples à venir,
 De fils reconnaissants le pieux souvenir.

Volume III. of *l'Athénée*, like the two others, is quite interesting, but I shall note specially: 'les Abeilles' by Mr. J. J. Martinez; 'la Race Latine en Louisiane' by Hon. C. Gayarré; 'Influence d'un grand Caractère en Bien ou en Mal sur la Destinée des Différents Peuples' by Mr. Maxime Queyrouze; 'Dante Alighieri,' conférence, and 'La Curée, poésie' by Dr. Alf. Mercier; 'Le Bouvreuil,' a story by Dr. C. Turpin; 'Le Soir, poésie' by Dr. J. J. Castellanos; 'Le Talisman de Gérard, nouvelle,' by Mr. Gustave Daussin; 'A ma Soeur' and 'A ma Fille, poésies,' by Mr. Max. Cousin. Miss Léona Queyrouze contributes several poems to this volume, and I think that there is no better way of maintaining the reputation of Louisianians for chivalry and courtesy to ladies, than by closing my very long review of our Louisiana authors, by the last work published in the journal of *l'Athénée* for 1886, a delightful sonnet by Miss Queyrouze:

SONNET.

Réponse au quatrain suivant de mon vieil ami, Monsieur Anatole Cousin.

"J'aurais voulu garder pour votre doux visage
 Tous les baisers d'un autre temps;
 Ils ne sont désormais qu'une injure à votre âge,
 Et ne font plus qu'outrager le printemps." A. C.

“ Sous son premier baiser le printemps qui s’éveille
Fait du sein de l’hiver s’épanouir la fleur ;
Ranimant la Nature à sa lèvre vermeille,
Il lui rend de nouveau la vie et la chaleur.

Dans sa coupe embaumée il distille à l’abeille
Un parfum qu’elle change en divine liqueur ;
Versant l’ardente sève aux doux fruits de la treille
Qui fait veiller l’amour et dormir la douleur.

Sous ton beau front blanchi l’éternelle jeunesse
Palpite, et le printemps et toute sa tendresse,
Et l’art te garde encor ses plus chaudes lueurs.

Toujours t’aime la muse, amoureuse immortelle ;
Quand s’incline ton front, ce n’est pas sous les pleurs,
Mais c’est pour écouter cette amante fidèle.”

Receive, ladies and gentlemen, my sincere thanks for your kindness in listening to this lengthy paper. The pages which I have read to you are the results of several months labor. Let me hope that my toil has not been in vain, and that you will carry to your homes the idea that the great Latin race has not degenerated in Louisiana, the old colony of two noble countries, France and Spain.